

ECONOMY

BUSINESS AREA 5



Plastics and Rubber



At a European level, **Spain is amongst the four main consumers of this product** together with Germany, France and Italy. In terms of production, our country manufactures some **80 %** of the standard plastics it consumes. As for exports, Spain sells in international markets 39% of its production of standard plastics, especially PET, with a total export volume of **64%**. The Spanish plastics sector, a basic industry for our economy, is on the rise. Last year this sector had a **growth rate of 7.9%**.

In the Region of Murcia, this sector has a long tradition, in part because of the **significant demand for plastic materials and products from other regional industries**. The strength of the farming and agrofood industries led to the development of a solid plastics sector which supplies materials for farming, packing and packaging, for fresh and processed food products, as well as equipment for fertigation systems, tanks and machinery. Other regional sectors demanding Murcia's increasing plastics production are **furniture** (polyurethane foam and specific materials), **footwear** (rubber processing and other materials) and **construction** (PVC for carpentry and profiling).

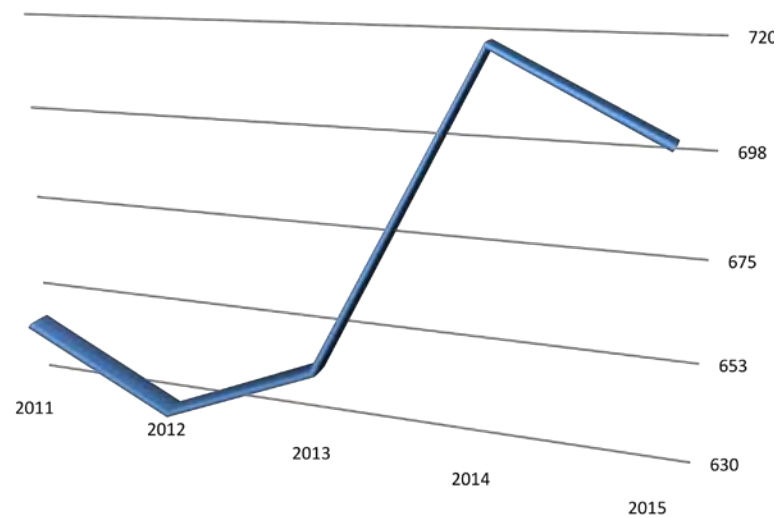
In addition, a sector applying advanced engineering, technology, innovation and the use of complex materials to manufacture primary and processed plastic materials, has been developed in the Region of Murcia. This sector, which in a relatively short time has established itself as a major international player, **includes manufacturers of vessels, helmets and hard hats**, as well as **technologically-advanced parts and components** for automobiles, boats, trucks and trains.

The plastics sector in the Region of Murcia is comprised of **175 companies contributing some €550 million to the regional economy and employing around 2,500 people**. Aware of the significance of this sector, the Murcian education authorities launched training services for technicians in thermoplastic polymer processing. Murcia is the fourth region that more rubber and plastic products exported last year, with a **sector turnover increase of 35% in five years**. Murcian exported plastics for a value of **€700 million last year**, with the main markets being China (17.94%), Germany (8.53%), Turkey (7.35%) and India (5.37%). Plastics sector turnover increases 35% in five years.

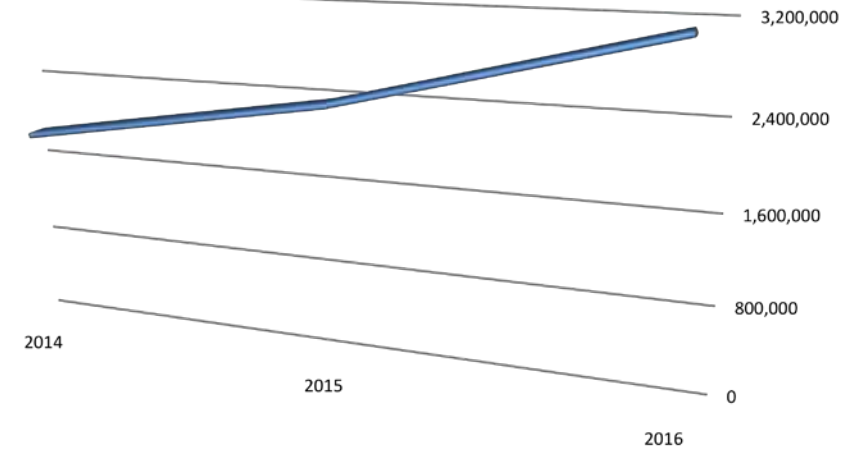
3.7% of national production comes from Murcia (which comprises only **2.2%** of territory) which means its production nearly doubles its size!

Murcia was home to the largest investment ever made in Spain ; the GE last-generation plastics factory, now owned by **Sabic**.

Murcia Region Plastics and Rubber Exports



Industrial Investment In the Plastics Industry



30% year-on-year investment increase during the 2014-2016 period

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

As for the large companies in this regional sector, namely **Sabic, Solplast, Plasbel and Coopbox**, they have their own units for research, technological development and innovation, and operate in a context of ever-changing conditions and knowledge transfer.

These companies took part in the development of programs aimed at reducing plastic material weight and primary material consumption, using less energy in manufacturing processes and packaged product transport, recovering a larger percentage of plastic material waste and increasing plastics recycling and reuse. All this has contributed to environmental impact minimization.